

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1. (currently amended) A data terminal equipment (DTE) comprising a port; at least one signal line connected to said port to establish a communication path; a set of transceivers, each transceiver being associated with a respective circuit in said DTE to establish communication along said communication path in accordance with a selected protocol; a switch in each of said at least one signal line, each of said switches having a set of connections with each of said transceivers; and an interface controller providing a control signal to condition said switches to connect each said signal line with a selected one of said transceivers to thereby connect said port to selected ones of said circuits in said DTE to accommodate said selected protocol; wherein said port connects is connectable to a corresponding port of a data circuit-terminating equipment (DCE) to effect communication between said DTE and said DCE via said selected protocol, and wherein said interface controller receives from said DCE, includes a protocol identifier independent of said at least one signal line and for providing an identification signal to said interface controller indicative of said selected protocol to enable said interface controller to condition said switches according to said selected protocol as indicated by said protocol identifier.
2. (original) The DTE of claim 1 wherein said selected protocol is defined by one of a plurality of electrical interface standards.
3. (original) The DTE of claim 1 wherein said plurality of electrical interface standards includes, but not limited to, ELA/TIA-232, EIA/TIA-449, EIA/TIA-530, and EIA/TIA-530A and IEEE 1284 standards.
4. – 5. (canceled)

6. (previously presented) The DTE of claim 1 wherein said interface controller provides said control signal to said switches, said control signal being dependent on said identification signal.
7. (original) The DTE of claim 1 wherein said DTE includes a power controller for controlling electrical power to said switches depending on whether said port is coupled to a DCE thereby reducing power consumption by said DTE.
8. (previously presented) The DTE of claim 7 wherein said power controller enables said DCE coupled to said port after said selected protocol has been determined.
9. (currently amended) An interface system for coupling a plurality of signals between a DTE and a DCE via a plurality of communication paths, said system having: a DTE port having at least one signal line, each to establish one of said plurality of communication paths, said DTE having a set of transceivers each associated with a respective circuit in said DTE to establish communication along said communication paths in accordance with a selected protocol; a DCE port having at least one signal line, each to establish one of said plurality of communication paths with a corresponding one of said signal lines of said DTE, said DCE having an interface driver circuit to establish communication along said communication paths in accordance with said selected protocol; a switch in each of said signal lines, each of said switches having a set of connections with each of said transceivers; and an interface controller providing a control signal to condition said switches to connect pairs of corresponding signal lines with a selected one of said transceivers wherein said DCE port ~~includes~~ provides a protocol identifier ~~for providing an identification signal to said interface controller, said protocol identifier being independent of said~~ at least one signal line and indicative of said selected protocol to enable said interface controller to condition said switches according to said selected protocol as indicated by said protocol identifier.
10. (original) The system of claim 9 wherein said plurality of communication paths includes a plurality of connector pins to provide said plurality of communication paths between said DTE and said DCE.

11. (original) The system of claim 10 wherein said DTE connector and DCE connector include a minimal number of predetermined connector pins, wherein said minimal number of predetermined connector pins is determined by any one of said plurality of electrical interface standards having the greatest number of signals needed for communication.
12. (original) The system of claim 9 wherein said plurality of electrical interface standards includes, but not limited to, EIA/TIA-232, EIA/TIA-449, EIA/TIA-530, and EIA/TIA-530A and IEEE 1284 standards.
13. (original) The system of claim 9 further comprising a power controller for controlling power to said DCE when said DTE and said DCE are in a coupling position.
14. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein said power controller controls electrical power to said switches when said DTE and said DCE are in a non-coupling position, thereby minimizing power consumption by said DTE.
15. (currently amended) A multi-protocol port coupled to a plurality of selectable circuits, each of said circuits being associated with an electrical interface standard and selectable via a mode-select input signal in order to facilitate communication with a device coupled to said port, said device having a circuit based on one of said electrical interface standards, said port having a plurality of signal lines for connecting a selected one of said selectable circuits with said circuit based on one of said electrical interface standards, each said signal lines having a switch with connections to each of a plurality of transceivers, said switches operating in response to a control signal provided by an interface controller to connect said port with said selected one of said selectable circuits, said interface controller operating in response to a protocol identifier provided by said device, said protocol identifier being independent of said at least one signal line and for providing an identification signal to said interface controller indicative of said selected protocol to enable said interface controller to condition said switches according to said protocol as indicated by said protocol identifier.